

ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR & WELFARE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Ear tagging

General:

This SOP outlines the general procedure that is to be used when ear tagging sheep or cattle.

Equipment:

- Personal protective equipment – overalls, boots (preferably steel-capped)
- Ear tags - suitable size for species, age and size of animal
- Ear tag applicator – suitable for chosen ear tag
- Disinfectant

Restraint:

Secure the animal's head to prevent jerking during tagging. A head bail is recommended, especially for large animals.

Personnel:

Only persons trained and approved for ear tagging will carry out the procedure.

Procedure:

1. Fit tags to applicator (see left picture below) and dip in disinfectant. When fitting two piece plastic tags always ensure that the male part of the tag is fitted from the back of the ear as centrally as possible. After insertion, the female part of the tag should be on the inside of the ear.



Female Male

2. Secure the animal's head to prevent jerking during tagging.
3. Clean the ear with disinfectant if necessary.
4. Identify the area on the ear where the tag is to be fitted (see pictures below).
The tag should be placed through the ear, avoiding the main blood vessels and ridges of cartilage. Different styles of tag are designed for different locations in the ear. You should therefore follow the manufacturer's instructions for the tag to perform in the way it was designed. Remember to allow for ear growth when fitting loop tags.
5. In a quick, firm motion, insert the tag.
6. Inspect the tag and site to ensure tag is secured.
7. Spray tag site with disinfectant e.g. Tincture of iodine

Adverse Events and Unexpected Outcomes

In the event of an unexpected adverse event occurring, the farm veterinarian will be called, and the incident will be reported to the appropriate farm manager and to the Ruakura Animal Ethics Committee. Possible adverse events, and the actions that are to be taken are to be taken:

- Excessive bleeding, swelling or infection – consult veterinarian.
- Tag not fitted or secured correctly – cut through tag and remove. Reapply new tag at the same site if appropriate or new site.

Occupational Safety and Health Considerations:

- Injuries from close contact with animals can occur. Ensure that animals are well restrained. Make sure that the animal is aware you are about to do something to it. Be careful not to allow any body parts to be trapped between the animal and the railing or other immovable objects when you are ear tagging, in the event that the animal moves unexpectedly.
- If ear tagging animals in the yards ensure that you do not get trapped between the animal and railing or other immovable objects. Ensure that the animals know that you are in the yards so as not to startle them.
- Stand to the side of the animals head when ear tagging to prevent contact if the animal should move abruptly.

Ideal locations of different ear tags

